

Dress codes

Level: Intermediate

Age: Adults

Time: Up to 90 minutes

Lesson aim:

- To explain about dress codes at work

Skills: Listening, Speaking

Materials:

- Worksheet
- Live from London: Business "Dress codes" video
- Transcript
- Around 20 small blank scraps of paper per student for Video task C

Before you watch

A

The aim of this activity is to enable students to briefly share information about work and dress codes. It also prepares the learners for the video content. They ask and answer questions in pairs. There is no need for lots of detail at this stage.

Video

A

Play the full video. Students respond to the question in pairs. This is an opportunity to share a personal response to the video content. The final question will prepare students for answering the questions in Language focus D.

B

Students watch the video again and decide if the statements are true or false. Encourage learners to explain to their partner why they believe their answer is the correct one.

Key:

1. False. Kieran says his outfit is smart-casual. (Concept check this during feedback.)
2. False. Vivek says they don't mind flip-flops if it is hot and they're not meeting clients.

3. True. Vivek explains that he is meeting big clients that day, but will not wear a suit.
4. False. Tolani explains that there is no official dress code. Also, she says that people dress casually in the office.
5. True.
6. True. Asif explains that resembling your clients makes them feel comfortable.

C

The aim of this activity is to focus on the many items of clothing and accessories mentioned by the different speakers – this is useful topic-specific vocabulary.

- Tell students to work in pairs. Give each student around 20 small pieces of scrap paper.
- Explain that each pair must write down the items of clothing or accessories they hear in the video. They use one piece of scrap paper per word or phrase. If teaching online, simply ask students to write down what they hear. The pair with the most words and phrases wins.
- Play the video. Make sure that students write the words as they hear them, not just because they think the word will appear.
- Do a total at the end of the video, announce the winner, then concept check any new words (e.g. 'cufflinks').

Key:

The following items are mentioned in the video in the following order:

dress, chinos, jumper, shirt, cufflinks, trousers, belt, wedding ring, watch, jeans, t-shirt, shorts, flip-flops, suit, tie, boots (booted) trainers, sweat top, jacket, blouse

D

Using the vocabulary from task C, learners add words to their table. They decide which of the clothing items fit each dress code. Concept check the dress codes as needed. If learners struggle, you could play extracts from the video, such as the comments from Kieran and Vivek in the opening minute, to help with ideas.

Key:

Students' own answers

However, do check that the difference between 'formal' and 'casual' is clear.

Language focus

A

This activity focuses learners' attention on some high-frequency language used in the video. Students read the extract and discuss the questions.

Key:

- The phrase 'tend to' explains that something usually happens. We use this phrase when generalising.
- The negative form is 'tend not to' (or sometimes 'not tend to'). Both phrases are followed by the infinitive.
- As you say the phrase, students will notice that the final /d/ of 'tend' is omitted. To help students pronounce the phrases, you could encourage them to think of the sound being like 'ten two', and 'ten not two' for the negative form.

B

This activity focuses on using 'tend to' in its correct form. First, students add the phrase correctly to each sentence. Highlight that this may mean changing or omitting some of the words in each sentence.

Key:

1. I **tend to be** busier at the start of the week than at the end.
2. Our meetings **tend to** go on for far too long!
3. I **tend not to/don't tend to** get through my workload for the day.
4. I **tend to** wear formal clothes to work.

Next, students decide if each statement is true for them. They finish by sharing their ideas. If they produce the target phrase at this stage, make sure they pronounce it correctly.

C

This activity focuses learner attention on other common structures in the transcript. First, students read the extracts. They then discuss the questions.

Key:

Sentence 1 explains that something is necessary. This is shown by the phrase 'have got to'.

Sentence 2 explains that the speaker chooses to wear certain items. 'I'll wear ...' suggests the speaker makes a conscious decision.

'If' expresses a condition. 'When' expresses certainty.

Note: students may expect clear use of a zero or first conditional structure here. However, in natural situations, speakers' use of these structures is more flexible and/or mixed.

D

This activity is a chance for learners to create conditional sentences in the context of work and dress codes. This is a preparation stage for the final Communication focus.

Communication focus

A

This activity enables students to replicate the interview from the video. They answered these questions at the start of the lesson, but now they should have more ideas and structure to help them extend their speaking. Allow time for students to prepare for the speaking task.

B

Students share information about their workplace dress codes. Encourage them to take notes when listening in the table provided. They should speak to different classmates. Also draw attention to the useful language box, which gives ideas for helping speakers expand on and explore the topic.

C

After speaking, learners reflect on the information they heard and shared by discussing the question. If they share a place of work, they could compare their own interpretation of their dress code, which may not be an official one.

D

This activity is a final, personal response to the lesson content and a reminder to review learnt vocabulary.